

The VISTA Leader's Guide to
Elevating Relationships
with Site Supervisors



**An Action Learning Challenge Product
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Welcome

Welcome to “The VISTA Leader’s Guide to Elevating Relationships with Site Supervisors.” Our team developed this product over the course of four months as part of an Action Learning Challenge (ALC). Eight VISTA Leaders from across the United States of America worked together to evaluate how VISTA Leaders and VISTA Site Supervisors can work in unison for the betterment of the program.

Our Goal and Purpose

Our team’s goal is to provide VISTA Leaders with tools to elevate their relationships with VISTA Site Supervisors. Our purpose is to help both parties work together to reach their full potential, maximize program outcomes, and improve the VISTA member experience.

Our team developed this product with two specific target populations in mind: VISTA Leaders and VISTA Site Supervisors. As current VISTA Leaders, we realized that we would have a greater influence over other Leaders. However, we also understand that communication is a two-way street, and both Leaders and supervisors need to be involved. With this in mind, we focused our product on Leaders, but also included a Top 9 List of resources and tools that will aid supervisors in communicating with their VISTA Leaders.

One goal of a VISTA Leader is to maximize the VISTA member’s performance and ensure a great VISTA experience for them. This product examines exactly how a VISTA Leader can work with the VISTA Site Supervisor to achieve this goal.

Within This Product

In examining the necessary tools for elevating the Leader/Supervisor relationship, we found that resources focused in three major content areas would be most beneficial:

- **Effective Communication Strategies**
- **Positive Relationship Building**
- **Understanding Leadership Styles**

In order for both Leaders and Supervisors to easily understand and retain the tools of this product, each focus area follows a similar structure:

1. Provide a **VISTA Leader Story** that outlines possible barriers
2. Supply an overview and introduction to the specific focus area

3. Present **Tools and Resources** to help VISTA Leaders and VISTA member Supervisors overcome barriers and elevate the relationship.
4. Provide examples of what success can look like through **“Elevating In Action”** examples.

Supervisor Companion Guide

More and more VISTA projects are including VISTA Leaders in their structure. Therefore, we wanted to provide an additional piece for Supervisors that provides them with the necessary knowledge to work with Leaders effectively and efficiently.

This additional resource, “9 Tips for Building a Dynamic VISTA Leader/Site Supervisor Relationship”, includes information on everything from role clarity to communication techniques to maximizing your VISTA members’ experience.

Definition of Key Terms

VISTA – Volunteers In Service To America

VISTA Site Supervisor – The Supervisor at the VISTA member’s respective host site who is responsible for day-to-day supervision and coaching of the VISTA. Other terms may include VISTA member Supervisor, Sub-site supervisor, VISTA Supervisor, etc.



Effective Communication Strategies

“Then you should say what you mean,’ the March Hare went on. ‘I do,’ Alice hastily replied; ‘at least—at least I mean what I say—that’s the same thing, you know.’ ‘Not the same thing a bit!’ said the Hatter. ‘You might just as well say that “I see what I eat” is the same thing as “I eat what I see!”’

*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland
by Lewis Carroll*

VISTA Leader Story: Misunderstanding VISTA Role and Policies

- Amy and Cody started their service as VISTA members at a local resource center with exuberance and willingness. A few months into their service, they started to feel as if their time was being spent supporting other staff members and helping run the office, rather than the capacity-building tasks they were originally assigned in their VISTA Assignment Description (VAD). Both Amy and Cody tried to ask for more projects related to their VAD, but both were told they needed to greet visitors and answer the phones to sustain the organization, which had been experiencing frequent staff turnover.
- At their quarterly site visit, Amy and Cody shared these experiences with their VISTA Leader and expressed dissatisfaction with their service. Their VISTA Leader, Jeff, scheduled a meeting with Amy, Cody, and the VISTA Site Supervisor to have a facilitated conflict mediation. Although the meeting helped set concrete goals for the VISTA members and emphasized the distinction between indirect and direct service, nothing changed. Amy and Cody continued to spend their time helping with clerical tasks instead of building capacity. When the two VISTA members updated their VISTA Leader on the continuing issue, Jeff went to his supervisor, Mindy, who said they’ll try talking to the VISTA Site Supervisor again.
- Now feeling defeated, both VISTA members consider the possibility of leaving their positions. It is now more important than ever, for Jeff and his supervisor to effectively communicate to the VISTA Site Supervisor what the VISTA policy states about the role of a VISTA member.

Why is Effective Communication Important?

Effective communication between Supervisors and VISTA Leaders is critical to a successful working relationship, as it saves time and energy that would otherwise be wasted on misunderstanding. By utilizing effective communication skills, you will be able to build a stronger relationship with the VISTA Site Supervisors, and therefore be better able to support the VISTA Members you lead.

What Does it Mean to Communicate Effectively?

Communication is the process of sharing information, thoughts or feelings. It involves both nonverbal and verbal behaviors.¹ It involves two or more people in a speaking (giving) and listening (receiving) role.^{1,3}

In order for communication to be effective, the message you are sending needs to be understood accurately by the receiver(s). By implementing strategies aimed towards clear understanding, effective communication will take place.

Tools and Resources

Strategies of Effective Communication

- **Listening:** The key to strong communication is strong listening. Effective communication is a challenging concept to achieve if either party is not actively listening to what is being said.
- **Mirroring:** "Mirroring" is a communication concept that helps build listening skills. A person is using the strategy of mirroring when the listener will paraphrase back to the speaker what the speaker just said. For example, if a VISTA Site Supervisor is sharing their frustrations about a VISTA member to a VISTA Leader, a strategy for the VISTA Leader to ensure they are understanding each concern would be to repeat the message back to the Site Supervisor (i.e. "What I hear you saying is that you are unhappy with x,y,z etc"). Mirroring provides the opportunity to explain any ambiguous remarks while also providing the speaker the opportunity to clarify any remarks not understood correctly.
- **Nonverbal communication:** Nonverbal communication plays an important role in effective communication. Maintaining eye contact and open body language sends the message that the speaker is being heard and what he/she has to say is being viewed as important by the listener(s).
- **"I Statements":** Using "I statements" is important when communicating, especially during tense situations or times of conflict. Speaking from your own experiences, thoughts, and opinions is crucial in maintaining an open line of communication and preventing further feeling of hostility or conflict. It removes the blame and allows each member to be heard. For example, instead of a VISTA Leader saying "you are not open to my ideas and not respecting my position" the VISTA Leader could say "I feel my ideas are not being respected and makes me feel that my position as VISTA Leader is not being respected." Although this change of words seems small, the effect it can have in keeping the communication line open is tremendous.

- **Asking the right questions:** Learning to not being afraid or hesitant to ask questions. The ability to clarify next steps can help prevent ineffective communication and misunderstanding from occurring in the future.

Verbal Communication

Speaking

Verbal communication can be complicated. Words are abstractions that have been assigned to an object, emotion or action. We use some of the same words for different meanings and rely solely on context and connotation to differentiate meaning. No communication is perfect, but communication can be functional. A person who communicates functionally firmly states their case, clarifies and qualifies what they are saying, asks for feedback, as well as is receptive to the feedback they receive.²

When speaking, there are a few ways to make yourself more easily understood:

1. Be clear, candid and concise about your thoughts and position,
2. Share your thinking behind what you have said (data and interpretations),
3. Check and inquire into perspectives that are different from yours.

There are 3 types of data you can use when explaining your thoughts:

- **The first is things that are directly observable.** As a VISTA Leader you may have seen the written policy detailing the role of a VISTA member.
- **The second is anecdotal, something you have read or previously experienced.** As a VISTA you may have had a site that did not understand your role and misused you.
- **The last is measurable data which includes statistics, reports and analyses.** As a VISTA Leader you may know that 45% of your VISTA Site Supervisors haven't received proper VISTA supervisor training.

In testing your perspective, seek for what you are missing and encourage others to share their views. Many people will ask "Do you agree?" This is a bad test because it makes it difficult for the other person to disagree. There are two great tests you can use. The first is a casual simple test. Ask, "Is there are better way to make sense of this?" Another option is the high power tests. High power tests are better when putting forward a strong opinion or when there is a power difference. Ask, "Can you help me see my blind spot?"²

Feedback

As a VISTA Leader, there will be times you may need to give feedback. Here are some tips for making your feedback effective:



- **First, make sure the speaker is open to receiving feedback.** While you may be able to sense this, it is a good practice to ask.
- **Second, make sure the feedback you give is actionable.** The best form of feedback is one that produces learning and real-life results, and avoids the creation or extension of hostile feelings. Giving actionable, constructive feedback allows the other person to learn more quickly and more specifically because they will know what is working and what is not.⁴

When giving feedback, also remember that what you see and how you interpret things might be different than how the other person sees and interprets those same things.⁵ We all give behaviors internal or external causes.⁵ People tend to see their success as resulting from internal things they did and their failures as something resulting from outside forces. This helps their motivation and persistence (Cannon). Outside viewers, such as yourself, many times commit a fundamental attribution error where you underestimate the situation and external causes of behavior and overestimate the impact of personal causes of behavior when trying to understand another person's actions.⁶ Try to keep this in mind as you are giving feedback to help prevent the other person from shutting down and not understanding what you are saying.

For example, a supervisor comes to you upset that their VISTA is not dressing professionally. They believe their VISTA does not care about their appearance and ask you to address it. The supervisor believes the actions (not dressing professionally) are internal to the VISTA. In talking to the VISTA, you discover they reason they are not dressing professionally is because they do not have professional clothes and cannot afford to go buy any on their VISTA stipend. They are blaming their problem on external causes.

Other things to keep in mind when giving feedback include making sure to focus on the behaviors that caused the situation. If you attack the person instead, they may believe they are not capable of changing, and the problem will continue. Additionally, make sure your feedback is concrete so the receiver knows exactly what you are saying. It is helpful to include information about the specific environment and behaviors you see, as well as including examples in your suggestion. Finally, make sure you give specific ways the person can change their behaviors.

In the example above, you could help the VISTA look through some extra donations at your site to find professional clothes or recommend some great thrift stores where they could get professional clothes. You might also suggest to the supervisor to give it some time while the VISTA works to build a better wardrobe.

Non-Verbal Communication

Active Listening

Listening helps us to build and improve our relationships. Many times, if the speaker feels they are being listened to, they are more likely to feel valued and therefore value the listener as well.

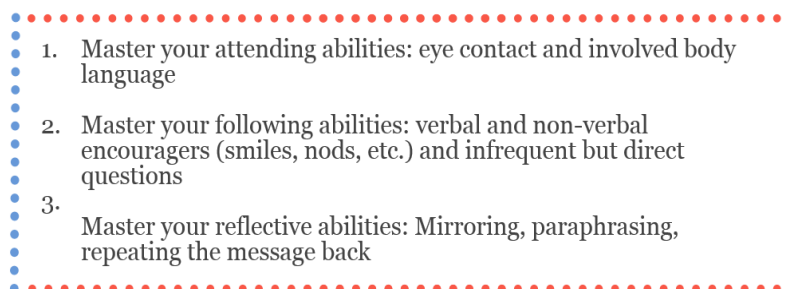


Listening is not the same as hearing. It can be very difficult to actively listen. There are three major barriers you have to overcome to truly listen. The first challenge to avoid is judging, this includes both praising and criticizing. Next you have to prevent yourself from responding by avoiding (i.e. changing the subject). Finally, listening is not about solving a problem. Sometimes a person needs to talk to another person to develop their own solution.³ This becomes very important as a VISTA Leader. It will not always be your job to fix, but instead help the VISTA site supervisor work out their own solution.

The best way to help yourself overcome these listening challenges is to actively listen. Active listening requires just a few skills, all of which can be learned:

- **The first set of skills to master is your attending abilities.** Attending skills involve things such as looking at the speaker, maintaining an involved posture (face the speaker, do not fidget, leaning in). Active listening is not just about how you look, it is also about the environment. If possible, choose an environment with few distractions and arrange the space to fit your purpose. For example, if you are trying to simply build a relationship with the VISTA Supervisor, sitting near each other is helpful.
- **Next, master your following abilities.** Following skills involve infrequent but direct questions, verbal and non-verbal encouragers (smiles, nods, “uh-huh”), and other signals that you are ready to listen (such as starting a conversation by asking about how the other person is today).
- **Finally, learn to master your reflective abilities.** Reflective or mirroring skills help ensure that you understand the message being presented. This can be achieved by paraphrasing the message, and occasionally making summative statements where you combine everything you have paraphrased. For example, if a VISTA Site Supervisor is sharing their frustrations about a VISTA member to a VISTA Leader, a strategy for the VISTA Leader to ensure they are understanding each concern would be to repeat the message back to the Site Supervisor (i.e. “What I hear you saying is that you are unhappy with x,y,z etc”). Mirroring provides the opportunity to explain any ambiguous remarks while also providing the speaker the opportunity to clarify any remarks not understood correctly.

Practicing these three skills are important, however if you really care about what the other person is saying, you will find that all three abilities will come naturally.

- 
1. Master your attending abilities: eye contact and involved body language
 2. Master your following abilities: verbal and non-verbal encouragers (smiles, nods, etc.) and infrequent but direct questions
 3. Master your reflective abilities: Mirroring, paraphrasing, repeating the message back

For tips on how to be a better listener, visit:

<http://www.mindtools.com/CommSkll/ActiveListening.htm>

Visit these other Action Learning Challenge products that you may find helpful:

1. Leading From a Distance: <http://tinyurl.com/leadingfromadistance>
2. Effective VISTA-Supervisor Relationships: <http://tinyurl.com/vista-supervisorrelationship>

Emotions

Emotions serve a social function and convey information about intentions. To navigate social interactions, people have to process emotional information and manage emotional responses. We infer other intentions from their emotional cues and use those cues to guide our behaviors. “The ability to manage emotions is likely to contribute to warm, smooth, and spontaneous social interactions to the extent that it enhances positive emotions, preempts conflict and tension, and facilitates executive functions as well as a flexible focus of attention”.⁶

Body Language

Body language is just as important as the words spoken in any given conversation. Understanding your own body language and how to read others’ body language can significantly improve the quality of the conversation between groups of people. Posture, eye contact, gestures, speech and tone of voice all play a part in what and how we communicate with others and each of these aspects should be considered when engaging in conversation.

For tools on how to better understand body language and its role in communication visit:

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/Body_Language.htm

When Communicating, Follow the 7 C's

Communication needs to be:



For more information, visit http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCS_85.htm

Elevating in Action: Ensuring Clear Communication

• Jeff and Mindy have standing weekly meetings to discuss any VISTA member issues, as it has been a common occurrence in the past. It is at one of these meetings that Jeff speaks to Mindy about the continued issues Amy and Cody are having at their site. Jeff explains to his supervisor, that he conducted a mediated discussion with both VISTA members and the VISTA Site Supervisor, but nothing seemed to change.

• As a VISTA Leader for multiple project sites, Jeff suggests that he and Mindy not only connect further with this specific Supervisor, but all the other VISTA Site Supervisors they oversee as well. With all VISTA member Supervisors together, Jeff will be able to clearly communicate the regulations and expectations of the VISTA program, as well as how to utilize the VISTA members for a sustainable impact.

• Mindy agrees, and Jeff sets up meetings with each VISTA Supervisor. Having been trained in effective communication skills, Jeff makes sure to actively listen to the site supervisor, mirrors what they are saying to ensure understanding, and maintains eye contact and open body language. Jeff reports back to his supervisor that all went well and each VISTA Supervisor indicated an understanding of the correct uses for their VISTA members. After about a month, the VISTA Leader checks in with Amy and Cody. Both VISTAs indicate that things have changed for the better, and they are enjoying finally being able to work on their VAD.

• To keep the success from his meetings going, Jeff schedules regular check-in meetings with each VISTA member Supervisor in order to maintain consistent communication with the site supervisor, hold them accountable for their supervisor responsibilities, and alleviate any issue before they get out of hand. At these meetings, Jeff brings a printed report of the VISTA member's most recent successes, a copy of the VISTA Assignment Description (VAD), and a set list of questions to evaluate how the Supervisor feels the VISTA member is progressing.

Positive Relationship Building

“Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude.”
William James

VISTA Leader Story: Lack of a Support From a Site Supervisor

- During Maria's time as VISTA Leader, she developed extremely positive and fruitful professional relationships with each of her VISTA Site Supervisors. To maintain open communication, Maria set a monthly meeting to check in with each Supervisor to converse about project progress and any upcoming goals. These meetings have allowed Maria to maintain strong relationships with each of her VISTA Supervisors and help each VISTA project site achieve their goals.
- However, about 6-months in, Maria gained a new VISTA Site Supervisor, John. Maria quickly noticed that this new relationship would not be the same as her relationships with the other Site Supervisors. John felt that meeting every month was a waste of time and not beneficial, and instead, instituted a meet-as-needed policy. Maria felt this new Site Supervisor was dismissive of her ideas and did not support her. The lack of communication and lack of support left Maria feeling very discouraged and frustrated. She knew how important a strong, positive relationship with VISTA Site Supervisor was, but didn't know how to move forward. Maria decided to turn to her own supervisor for advice.

What is Positive Relationship in a Professional Context?

A relationship is defined as the way in which two or more people or groups talk to, behave towards, and deal with each other. Relationships are formed in all parts of your life, family, friends, colleagues etc. While a professional relationship can be similar to other types of relationships, one major difference is that professional relationships include boundaries. Think about how you interact with people in your organization versus how you interact with people outside your organization. You say different things and act a different way.

A positive relationship is one where two people can work together in a cooperative manner. It involves trust, support, open communication and respect. However, this does not mean the relationship is free of conflict. In fact, a positive relationship will be capable of working through conflict in an open, cooperative and respectful dialogue.

Benefits of a Positive Relationship

Positive professional relationships, including those with supervisors, have many benefits. Positive professional relationships help to foster engagement.⁷ This means supervisors will be more engaged with you, as a VISTA Leader, their VISTA members, and the VISTA program as a whole. For

many VISTA Leaders, part of their VLAD is to help supervisors understand the VISTA program. Forming relationships is the first step! Relationships can also create an “all-in-it together” mentality which may help supervisors be more loyal to the mission of the VISTA program.⁸

Positive professional relationships will also make your environment more enjoyable.^{7,8} Relationships are the bases for a social support network and collaboration. Forming this positive connection will help supervisors trust you more and be more likely to tell you when they need your assistance.

Positive professional relationships are the context for teamwork, leadership and collaboration.⁹ When a strong, positive professional relationship exists, the collaboration between parties are elevated to a stronger, more collaborative working relationship with greater results.

Appreciative Inquiry

Appreciative Inquiry is the belief that every organization has something that works—things that give it life when it is most alive, effective, successful, and connected in healthy ways to its stakeholders and communities. Appreciative Inquiry begins by identifying what is positive and then connects to those items in ways that heighten energy and vision for change.¹¹ This theory can be applied not just to organizational assets but also relationships. When the strengths in a relationship are focused on and enhanced, the overall effectiveness of the relationship and collaborative culture will also strengthen.

Here are some examples of Appreciative Inquiry questions a VISTA Leader could ask a VISTA Site Supervisor to identify ways they can work together to their full potential:

1. Describe a highpoint experience---a time when you felt most alive and engaged in your work. What was it about you, the situation, the organization, and the leadership that allowed this peak experience to emerge?
2. When have you been involved in a group which kept its eyes on the prize—that maintained a let’s do it attitude, and, because of this approach, achieved a lot? What was the high point of working in that group? What did you discover about working relationships?
3. Imagine you have a magic wand and have three wishes to make your service an extraordinary experience for you. What would your wishes be?

Tools and Resources

S.M.A.R.T. GOALS

One way to elevate a relationship to a more productive level is by setting strong long term and short term goals. Below is a tool that can help you set goals that will lead to success.

For each goal you set, make sure they are S.M.A.R.T. - **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic, and **T**ime-bound. See the chart below for more details on how to make your goals S.M.A.R.T.

S PECIFIC	This aspect answers the Who, Where, When, What and Why. For example, a poor goal is “recruit more volunteers.” A specific goal would be “Work with Education University to have volunteers staff our after school program 3 days a week.”
M EASURABLE	This part ensures that you will be able to determine whether or not you met your goal. It answers how much or how many. Continuing the volunteer recruitment example, a measurable goal would be “recruit 35 volunteers for our after school program.”
A TTAINABLE	This is where you answer the question “is my goal within the realm of possibility?” If you are trying to recruit 35 volunteers, but only recruit from a class of 30 students, you won’t be able to reach your goal. Make sure your goal can be attained before you go after achieving it!
R EALISTIC	Here you answer the question, “Can I reach my goal given the resources I have available?” This is where you determine how high you are setting your goal. How much can you achieve in the time you have available?
T IME-BOUND	This is where you consider the deadline for your goal. When do you need to have this finished by to make sure you stay on task and complete everything in a timely fashion? Give your goal a hard date to be finished by, so that you can determine at that moment whether or not the goal was accomplished.

Creating S.M.A.R.T. Goals. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://topachievement.com/smart.html>¹²

Putting everything together in one S.M.A.R.T. goal would look like this:

By the end of my second month as a VISTA, I will have recruited 35 volunteers from the local university to staff our after school program 3 days a week.

To take an evaluation and see if you are achieving your goals, visit:

<http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/goal-setting-quiz.htm>

S.W.O.T. ANALYSIS

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

Another way you can elevate your relationship to a more productive level is to perform a SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis is an evaluation tool, set up in a grid, that allows individuals or groups the opportunity to take a look at an organization or situation and uncover what's working, what could be improved, and what potential roadblocks may be in the way of accomplishing your goal. The chart below shows one example of how to use the SWOT chart.

It is important to note that strengths and weaknesses are an internal evaluation. You will discuss things like personal qualities or characteristics, things happening within the organization, circumstances you have control over, etc. On the contrary, opportunities and threats are external considerations. So what is happening around you that can be taken advantage of or even be harmful to you or your situation.

<p>STRENGTHS</p> <p>GOAL: To determine what internally sets you apart from others.</p> <p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your site/VISTA really good at? 2. What skills do other people recognize in your VISTA? 3. What can your site get recognized or awarded for? 4. What are you most proud of personally and most proud of about your site? 5. What experiences, connections and resources do you have access to that others don't? 	<p>WEAKNESSES</p> <p>GOAL: To determine internally what you aren't good at and what needs improved.</p> <p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you try to accomplish but can't seem to do well? 2. What does your VAD say needs accomplished that you may not know how to do? 3. Where are you vulnerable? 4. What are things that you feel like you "have to do?" 5. Where do you lack experience, resources or connections that you need? 6. Where is there confusion about the roles of the site supervisor vs. the VISTA Leader?
<p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>GOAL: To identify what external elements you may be able to take advantage of or will improve your chances of success.</p> <p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How can you maximize your strengths? 2. What elements of your VAD can you do well? 3. What knowledge or experience can the VISTA Leader and Site Supervisor bring to the VISTA? 4. What connections or partnerships can you form to make your year successful? 	<p>THREATS</p> <p>GOAL: To identify things that can inhibit or limit your success. These may be unavoidable, but they can be planned for.</p> <p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What problems could your weaknesses cause? 2. What could result from a lack of communication? 3. What obstacles have others overcome to get where you want to go? 4. What can prevent your VISTA from accomplishing their VAD?

SWOT Analysis. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm ¹³



P.E.S.T. ANALYSIS

Similar to the SWOT analysis, the PEST analysis is a grid evaluation that looks at the factors surrounding you or your situation so you can plan ahead be more successful in the long term. PEST stands for Political, Economic, Socio-Cultural and Technological environments in which you function. Refer to the following grid to see how a PEST analysis works.

<p>POLITICAL FACTORS</p> <p>GOAL: Consider the influence that policies and procedures may have on the opportunities you're considering.</p> <p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What policies do CNCS have that govern the work you can do? 2. What does my local government say about the work that I'm doing? How have they influenced this work through policies and actions in the past? 3. How can we engage local officials to support this goal? 	<p>ECONOMIC FACTORS</p> <p>GOAL: Identify monetary factors that may influence your decisions.</p> <p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What funds are available to the VISTA to complete the goals on their VAD? 2. If you are operating from a distance, what funds are available to travel? 3. How can you assist the VISTA in finding funding opportunities?
<p>SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS</p> <p>GOAL: Identify societal trends surrounding your opportunities.</p> <p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What demographics are your organization serving? 2. Are there lifestyle trends in your community that will affect the success of your year? 3. What is the educational level of all parties involved? What training does the VISTA need? What education may clients, community members or volunteers need? 	<p>TECHNOLOGICAL FACTORS</p> <p>GOAL: Identify what technology is available for your term.</p> <p>QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What technology is available for stronger communication? 2. What free resources are available that you may be able to take advantage of?

PEST Analysis. (n.d.). Retrieved from http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_09.htm ¹⁴

Elements of a Positive Relationship

There are several basic elements to every positive relationship. Four great elements to base your professional relationships on are **trust, respect, support and communication**.

- **Trust** is the feeling that others can rely on you. They know you are capable of doing everything in your VLAD, knowledgeable of your VISTA Leader role and available as needed. Respect includes an unrestricted regard for another person.
- **Respect** does not rely solely on a person's status in the workplace. The respect you give your VISTAs should be the same respect you give your own supervisor and administrative staff.
- Someone who is **supportive** provides emotional support for others when needed. As a VISTA Leader, support is not just something you provide for your VISTAs; you need be able and ready to support to anyone, including VISTA Supervisors.
- **Communication** needs to be as optimistic, open, and direct as possible.¹⁰ See the first section for more information and resources for communication.

Just as there are basic elements to a positive relationship, there are also several ways to make your relationship the most productive. Wheelan (2010) recommends the following ways to make your relationships as productive as possible:¹⁰

1. Set clear goals. Check out S.M.A.R.T. goals to learn more about setting goals that lead to success.
2. Set roles for each party. See the VISTA Leader and Supervisor role comparison sheet for additional guidance.
3. Make sure to inform each other about the VISTAs at your site and how you are interacting with them.
4. As your relationship advances, adapt to each other.
5. Use an open communication structure. This allows you to both participate and give feedback.
6. Make a plan to solve problems and make decisions when they arise.
7. Hold yourself to a schedule. If you say you are going to do something, do it in a timely manner.
8. Be understanding of each other's differences.

Building Relationships

It is important to build relationships with supervisors as soon as possible. One important thing to remember is that relationships are built on an individual basis. You cannot build relationships by meeting with all of the Site Supervisors at once. Each person is an individual and each relationship requires different things.

The first step is to breakdown any mental barriers, including the idea that the Site Supervisor is too high on the organizational chain for you to reach. Do not be afraid of the supervisor's power. To overcome your fear of rejection, assume they also want an effective professional relationship with you.¹⁸

The next step is to reach out to the supervisor. Many times a person is waiting to be invited to be involved. Ask the supervisor to do something special with you and their VISTA. Ask them how you can be involved in their projects.¹⁵ Relationships go beyond the work environment. People like to talk about themselves and their life outside of work. Ask each supervisor about themselves and tell them about yourself. By sharing personal information you will be able to make a connection with each of the supervisors. When learning about the other person, do not judge them, just listen.^{8,15,18}

Lastly, be persistent in winning their trust. Communicate and interact repeatedly. It may take some time.^{15,18} Nothing is instantaneous.

Maintaining Relationships

Once you have built a relationship with a supervisor, you must maintain it. You are personally responsible for maintaining relationships, and it often only takes a few minutes each day to maintain any relationship.⁹ Here are a few tips:

- **Occasionally check in with each supervisor.** When you check in, make sure to thank them for what they are doing for their VISTA and ask if there is any way you can help. It is important to acknowledge their time and effort, as well as indicate your availability to aiding in their success. During all interactions be sure to communicate openly. Check out the Effective Communication section for more information.
- **Pay attention to your actions** and how they might assist or undermine a positive relationship.⁹ If you both agree to set aside time each month to speak and you consistently are late, you may be sending a message that you do not care.
- **Set boundaries.**⁸ Boundaries are topics of conversation that each of you agree to not talk about or share. For example, supervisors may not want you to get overly involved in their day to day task, but do need your assistance understanding the larger picture and interacting with their VISTAs. Additionally, you may not want to talk about personal conversations you have with your VISTAs, but do want to keep the Site Supervisor aware of barriers their particular VISTA member is facing. It is all about striking a balance.

When Conflict Arises

In any relationship, conflict will eventually surface. There are both positive and negative ways to deal with such conflict. People react to conflict in four different ways:

The first style is avoidance. This style is associated with people who really dislike conflict and who run away the moment things become difficult. They may also be passive aggressive. An example would be a Site Supervisor who tells you they are in agreement with your idea, but then notifies your supervisor that your idea is inappropriate.

A second style is competitiveness. Competition is when a person cares for their desires above all others', and will use all their power to achieve those goals. Competitors can be characterized as "my way or the highway".¹⁶ An example would be a Site Supervisor who uses their authority over their VISTA member to keep you out of the loop.

In contrast, a third style is accommodation. People who accommodate place the relationship above all else and will give anything and everything to keep the relationship active. An example would be a supervisor who agrees with everything you suggest, with no feedback, in order to ensure your willingness to assist them and their VISTA member.

The final style is compromising. Someone who compromises in conflict settles for a small bit of what each party wants.¹⁶ An example would be a VISTA Supervisor that is constantly trying to find middle ground with you and/or their VISTA member, in order to ensure fairness.

To treat conflict in a healthy manner, here are four conversational steps you could take:

The first is the "what happened" conversation. We spend a lot of time assuming our view of the situation is correct, but conflicts are really about conflicting "perceptions, interpretations, and values". In every situation, we are constantly assessing what information we have and interpreting that information through the lens of our past and internal rules. To resolve the "what happened" conversation both parties must adopt a learning stance. This is where both parties try to understand the other's point of view. In addition, each party must develop an "and" stand, which assumes both interpretations are correct.¹⁷ Without this agreement, the other two conversations cannot take place.

Second is the "feeling" conversation, which is central to the conflict. Feelings are what brought the conflict to the forefront. If you do not have a separate conversation addressing both parties' feelings, those very feelings will leak into the other conversations, making it difficult to try and understand the other's point of view. The best way to speak about feelings is to frame your feelings within the problem at hand. It is important to not try and evaluate your or the other party's emotions. If possible, just tell the other person what you are feeling and allow them time to do the same.¹⁷



Next is the “identity” conversation. This conversation is done internally. It involves asking yourself what this issue says about your self-worth and sense of who you are.¹⁷ This is an important step that cannot be skipped. This is time that allows you to reflect and grow.

The final step is the “learning” conversation. This final conversation will hopefully end in collaboration and understanding. During this phase, a “third story” is adopted, one that allows both individual stories to have some truth. If you are struggling, invite a third party in to help identify and create a “third story”. Next, extend an invitation to a third party to help you find a resolution. When embarking on the “learning” conversation, be sure to inform the other person of your purpose in discussing the issue at hand. It is vital that you do not impose that they must participate; if they do not join, just be persistent in your desire to discuss the issue, and if not now then hopefully later. During the conversation, make sure to talk about each story, where that story comes from, the impact on you, and your feelings. Make sure to reflect on any identity issues you have and take responsibility for your contribution to the issue.

Below are some additional steps to help you with conflict:

1. Ask open ended questions;
2. Ask for more concrete information;
3. Listen;
4. Paraphrase for Clarity;
5. Acknowledge their feelings (let them know they are valid even if you do not agree with them.);
6. Say what you mean, don’t rely on them to pick up your real meaning from sub-context;
7. Start with what matters most to you;
8. Gather as much information as possible in trying to solve your problem;
9. Use “I” statements, do not use “you” statements (they sound like blaming);
10. Invent options that would make both parties happy; and
11. Test the solutions you create.

*Adapted from Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most. Stone, Patton, and Heen, 1999.*¹⁷

Elevating in Action: Building Strong Relationships

- After discussing the situation with her own supervisor, Maria came up with a set of proactive steps to begin developing a positive relationship with this new Site Supervisor.
- First, in order to ensure that John understood her role in the VISTA member's year, Maria set up an on-site orientation and training with the VISTA and the new Site Supervisor. This training allowed Maria to explain to John what her role is as a VISTA Leader, what the Site Supervisor's role should be, explain the VISTA member's project in greater detail, as well as address any questions he had. By putting this orientation together, Maria helped this new Site Supervisor better understand what the various roles were in the program and explained the importance of keeping a clear, open line of communication. She further explained that the monthly meetings allowed for this type of communication.
- By the end of the meeting, John better understood Maria's role, as well as his own. He thanked the VISTA Leader for her time and agreed to take time to meet with her on a monthly basis. Additionally, he and Maria decided, that for clarity, Maria would also follow these meetings up with an email to recap what was covered and answer any additional questions.

Understanding Leadership Styles



“The greatest leaders mobilize others by coalescing people around a shared vision.”

- Ken Blanchard



VISTA Leader Story: Conflicting Leadership Styles

- As part of his VISTA Leader year, Thomas is developing a community-wide outreach event for all the VISTA members at his site. He is very excited about taking the lead. In order for the event planning to begin, Thomas needs to get approval for VISTA participation from all VISTA member Supervisors.
- Thomas has been struggling with developing and maintaining a positive relationship with Betty, one of the Site Supervisors. This particular VISTA member Supervisor has been described as “bold and brash” by many of her co-workers. In fact, several times Thomas has been told by the Betty's co-workers that she is not afraid to be blunt, even if it means being rude. Thomas has been intimidated by this particular VISTA Supervisor's leadership style since he started his VISTA Leader term, and is nervous to share his idea and get permission for VISTA member participation. Thomas wants to present his information in a way that best compliments this Site Supervisor's leadership style, but does not know what exactly he should do. He seeks out help from his own supervisor.

What is Leadership?

One definition of leadership is “a process of social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task”.¹⁹ Leadership is also defined as the process by which a person gets a group to pursue an objective or vision,²⁰ coordinating activities of group members, being focused on the needs of the people and the organization being lead.²¹ Leadership includes many different concepts, such as exercising power, gaining status, being the boss, task orientation, caring for people, empowerment, providing a vision, and/or showing a moral way.²⁰ Regardless of the definition and concept, one thing is clear: leaders lead in many different styles.

Understanding Leadership Styles

It is important to understand leadership styles because the way a person leads can affect the organization's relationship with the community, influence the way a team interacts, or influence how much risk a team is willing to take in proposing new ideas.²³ It is important to be conscious of both your style and the style of other leaders. This awareness helps keep you, your team and your organization on track.²⁰

Being more understanding of your leadership style and the style of those alongside you will help you be more engaged, as well as help you understand what annoys or energizes you and those you work with. Ultimately, understanding leadership styles will make you a stronger and more productive VISTA Leader.

Tools and Resources

Styles of Leadership

Leadership style is defined as the way the process of leadership is implemented.²⁰ This implementation includes the leader's methods of interacting with others, their vision of their position and how successful they are in their leadership position. Most great leaders are fluid and move between many different styles.^{21-22,26}

There are several different ways researchers classify leadership styles:

Transactional vs. Transformational Leadership

The easiest way to distinguish styles of leadership is transactional or transformational leadership. **Transactional leaders** think of each interaction between themselves and another person as a transaction. They believe that for every instance in which they do something nice for another person, that person owes them something nice back. For example, a VISTA Supervisor might think that because they took time to answer a few questions for you, that you owe him/her a favor.

Transformational leaders, on the other hand, have the goal of giving their team members a vision, values, and hopes. They use different methods to do this including persuasion, setting examples, charisma, task orientation, and caring for their people.²⁰ For example, a VISTA Supervisor might explain that their VISTA is writing thank you letters because doing so increases the likelihood that somebody would donate again.

Specific Styles

A second way to describe leadership styles is by describing and grouping certain characteristics. This leadership style is influenced by prior experiences, "action logic", and your emotional intelligence.^{22-23,26} When exhibiting this style, leaders do not act based on a fixed personality, but instead use their prior experiences to influence their actions. "Action logic" is how a leader reacts when their power is challenged and how they interact with their surroundings.²³ Emotional Intelligence is the ability to manage oneself and one's relationships effectively. It involves self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and social skills.²²

This style of leadership tends to change the climate of the organization. Climate includes such factors as how free team members feel to innovate (flexibility), how responsible to the organization the team members feel, the level of standards, what performance feedback is given, what reward system is



available, the clarity of the mission, and how strong the commitment to the team purpose is.²² Take a moment to think about your own site - how free do you feel to innovate, and how responsible do you feel for your projects?

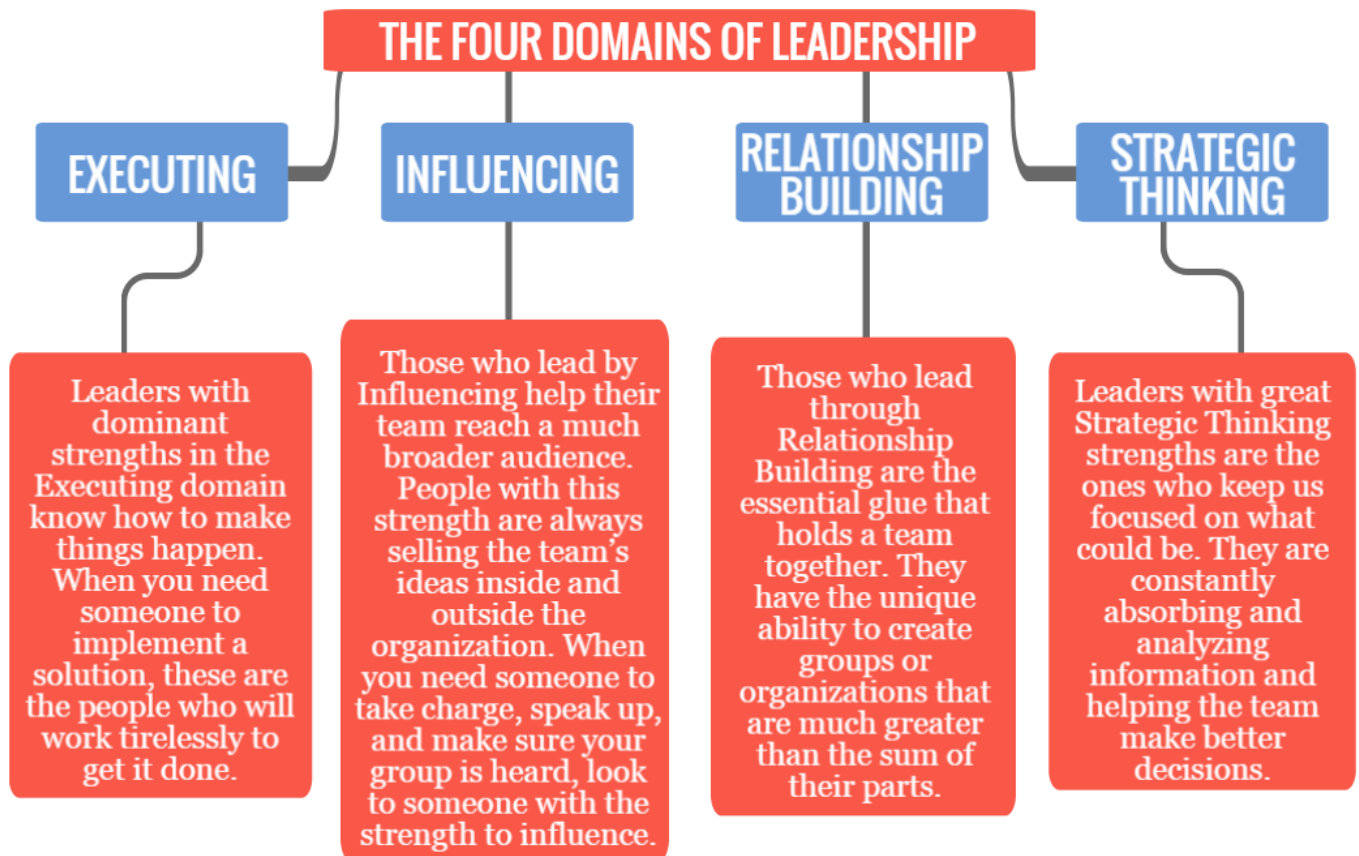
Below are a few types of leadership:

1. **Coercive Leaders:** Coercive leaders demand immediate compliance. A coercive leader needs to feel in control. All decisions are made from the top-down, and new ideas cannot be introduced by the team. Team members tend to not understand a coercive leader's vision nor do they feel responsible for the project. It is recommended that this style should only be used in an emergency or when the leader needs to shock people into changing their methods.²¹⁻²³
2. **Pacesetting Leaders:** Pacesetting leaders set high performance standards, as well as expect excellence and self-direction of their team members. They set goals to do tasks better and faster, and expect their team to follow such goals. In a pacesetting environment team members can feel overwhelmed, that guidelines are not clear, and/or that they cannot have their own vision. Pacesetting should be used rarely, only when action and results are critical.^{21-22,26}
3. **Affiliative Leaders:** Affiliative leaders believe "people come first".²² They value individuals and their emotions more than the task. Affiliative leaders build loyalty in their team. They also allow their team to experiment, have good communication and give lots of positive feedback. The major problem with this type of leadership is that it tends to let poor performance go uncorrected.²¹⁻²³
4. **Democratic Leaders:** Democratic leaders build consensus through participation. They spend time getting ideas, getting buy-in to ideas, as well as building trust and commitment. Democratic leaders increase a team's morale, feelings of responsibility and are realistic about what can and cannot be accomplished. This style is good when you are uncertain about what is going on at a site because you are new and need guidance. It is not good when there is a crisis or when the team is uninformed about a project.²¹⁻²²
5. **Coaching Leaders:** Coaching leaders focus on developing people for the future by looking for and connecting their strengths and weaknesses to future plans. Coaching leaders are good at delegating challenging tasks, and tend to create a good environment for the team. They have constant dialogue with their team members, which explains the organizational vision, allows for experimentation and builds commitment by telling employees "I believe in you".²¹⁻²² This style is great in most situations, but can be harmful if the team is in a crisis and lacks time for development.
6. **Authoritative Leaders:** Authoritative leaders move people towards a vision and let them find a way to complete that goal. This style increases team commitment, rewards and an understanding of the vision. This style is great in most situations especially when the organization needs a new direction or when the group is drifting away from their goals. Authoritative leaders must be careful to not become overbearing.



Strengths Based Leadership

Strengths based leaderships is a concept Tom Rath and Barry Conchie explain in their book, “Strengths Based Leadership.” According to Rath and Conchie, there are 4 domains of leadership. See the chart below for each leadership style and what having those strengths mean.



Rath, T., & Conchie, B. (2008). *Strengths Based Leadership: Great Leaders, Teams, and Why People Follow*. New York, NY: Gallup, Inc.²⁴

For more information or to find out your own strengths, we encourage you to visit the book “Strengths Based Leadership” by Tom Rath and Barry Conchie. This resource will walk you through what your strengths mean, how you can elevate your strengths in teams and leadership and how to work with others’ strengths.

Determining the Appropriate Leadership Style

When determining your own leadership style you need to first know thyself.²⁰ The following two questions can help:

- What is the best way to get a job done and work with others?
- How do you set goals and manage the results?

**Think of what you've learned about different styles.
What type of leader do you want to be?
Find yourself a leadership mentor.
Above all else, believe in yourself.**

Adapted from ASAE and Rabinowitz, 2014.^{20,26}

Regardless of your preferred style, it is important to adapt to the situation and challenges of the team.²² For example, if you are a new VISTA Leader, your style needs to be close to what the organization expects or similar to that of the VISTA Leader prior to you. After all, your leadership is about the needs of the people and the team, not yourself.²⁰⁻²¹ In time, as your team changes and grows you can transform into other styles as needed.

Ten Common Leadership Mistakes

- 1. Not Providing Feedback
- 2. Not Making Time for Your Team
- 3. Being Too “Hands-Off”
- 4. Being Too Friendly
- 5. Failing to Define Goals
- 6. Misunderstanding Motivation
- 7. Hurrying Recruitment
- 8. Not “Walking the Walk”
- 9. Not Delegating
- 10. Not Understanding Your Role

List taken from <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/leadership-mistakes.htm>. Be sure to check out the link for more information on each mistake!

Working With Different Leadership Styles

Dale Carnegie (2015) recommends the following tips when working with people with different Leadership Styles:²⁵

1. Think about how to make those around you comfortable by adjusting your style to them;
2. Focus on the outcomes and appreciate the differences in others;
3. Adjust your expectations because many Site Supervisors will do things differently than you;
4. Be willing to go the extra mile. It can take a lot for somebody to change their style but you can help by reaching out to them.

To assess your leadership and receive feedback on where you can improve, visit:

http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_50.htm

Visit another Action Learning Challenge product that you may find helpful:

VISTA Leader Roles: Effective Practices and Examples

http://www.vistacampus.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/87/Action_Learning/Team_Products/Leader_Roles_Project.pdf

Elevating in Action: Different Leadership Styles & How to Work With Them

- After working in the field for 25 years, Sarah knows that supervisors and VISTA Leaders don't always have complementing leadership styles. Knowing that her VISTA Leader, Thomas, is already having issues working with one of his VISTA member Supervisors, Sarah plans a workshop for all of the VISTA Site Supervisors to discuss different leadership styles and how to put them into practice when supervising VISTA members. She also invites Thomas to join.
- During the workshop, Sarah facilitates a StrengthsFinder assessment with the VISTA Supervisors and Thomas to determine each of their strengths. They then connect these strengths into leadership styles and learn how to lead most efficiently using their strengths. Sarah then has Thomas play out fictional scenarios with each of the Site Supervisors to practice utilizing their own strengths. Sarah also educates the participants on the elements of transformative leadership, and explains how to set goals by inspiring, persuading and caring for other as individuals.

A VISTA Supervisor's Guide to working with a VISTA Leader

9 tips for success



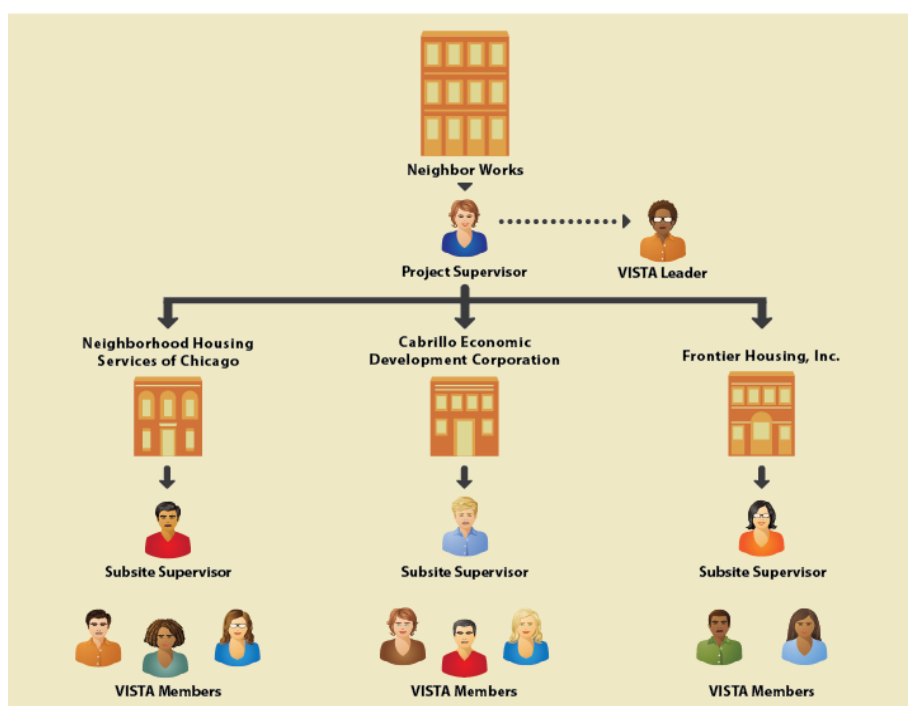
VISTA Leaders can have an immense impact on the success of VISTA members and VISTA projects. Fostering an effective, dynamic, and positive relationship with the VISTA Leader connected to your project is crucial in reaping the many benefits VISTAs provide to organizations addressing poverty.

The following suggestions include resources and guidance for engaging with VISTA Leaders effectively.

1. Understand the VISTA organizational structure

Knowing how your organization, your supervisor role, and the VISTA Leader role fits into the overall VISTA organizational structure is the first step to setting up an effective relationship with your organization's VISTA Leader.

- See this [organizational chart](#)²⁷ to understand the national service network that supports VISTA.
- The following chart gives you a closer look at the organization structure of intermediary sites:



AmeriCorps VISTA engages over 7,000 individuals wanting to give back to their communities and provide tangible solutions to poverty.

2. Know the basics of the VISTA Leader program

Understanding how VISTA Leaders contribute to VISTA projects helps you as a supervisor be clear about role expectations, position responsibilities, and project goals.

- This [VISTA Leader overview](#)²⁸ from the supervisor orientation workbook provides some background information about the mission, goals, and responsibilities of VISTA Leaders.
- This list describes the [Limitations on Member Activities and Duties](#).²⁹

- VISTA members and Leaders may also participate in other [limited activities](#)³⁰ related to their work, including teleservice, educational courses, and scholarship/financial aid programs.
- Design a powerful [VISTA Leader Assignment Description \(VLAD\)](#)³¹ considering the roles of a VISTA Leader (below).

VISTA Leaders are members who have served at least one VISTA year and are often seeking an extended service and leadership opportunity. VISTA Leaders are placed with organizations that have at least eight VISTA members to coordinate efforts between site sponsors, multi-site projects, VISTAs (often across a state or multiple states), and the [Corporation for National and Community Service \(CNCS\)](#).³²

3. Be aware of the various roles of the VISTA Leader

VISTA Leaders take on a variety of different roles throughout the course of their service. Having a basic understanding of these roles can help illustrate how you can utilize your organization's VISTA Leader in an effective way.

- **[Ambassador](#)**: VISTA leaders represent national and community service in your town or city and region. They are a spokesperson and advocate for VISTA, your sponsoring organization and their respective missions.³³
- **[Facilitator/Educator](#)**: VISTA Leaders facilitate the transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes to VISTA members to help contribute to a meaningful service experience and successful project outcome.³⁴
- **[Mentor](#)**: VISTA Leaders influence and guide VISTA members toward achieving their VISTA Assignment Description (VAD) goals.³⁵
- **[Liaison](#)**: VISTA Leaders help build relationships between key players (self, members, supervisor, sponsor, state office, community) and identify the needs of these players. They ensure relationships between team members are on track and that members have what they need in order to accomplish their goals.³⁶
- **[Recruiter](#)**: VISTA Leaders contribute to finding the right people for the next year's open VISTA positions. They work to connect someone's skills and desires with the requirements and vision of the position and shared VISTA goal of eliminating poverty.³⁷
- **[Resource Generator](#)**: VISTA Leaders facilitate VISTA members' successful completion of project tasks by helping them access the resources they need.³⁸

Each of the above links to a section on the VISTA Campus that provides a number of resources around each role. Be sure to visit and explore!



4. Recognize the differences between the role of a VISTA Leader and the role of a Supervisor and help communicate these differences to your VISTAs, site staff, fellow supervisors, and partners.

Understanding role differences allows you and your VISTA project to stay compliant with [CNCS rules and regulations](#).³⁹

- This [Comparison of VISTA Leader and Supervisor roles](#)⁴⁰ provides clarity on appropriate VISTA Leader tasks.

VISTA Leaders are not supervisors. Rather, they are a direct link to and resource for VISTA members. VISTA Leaders are often the “first responder” in resolving conflicts, problem-solving, and creating professional development opportunities for VISTAs.

5. Establish an open line of communication with your organization’s VISTA Leader.

Communication (or lack thereof) can be the biggest challenge between Supervisors and VISTA Leaders. Making sure VISTA Leaders feel heard and included helps them understand how they fit into the organization, as well as helping them see how they can contribute.

When communicating,

- Be clear, candid and concise about your thoughts and position
- Share your thinking behind what you have said (data and interpretations).
- Check for perspectives that are different from yours and inquire into the thinking behind those.

Inevitably, conflict will arise. Here are some suggestions to ease difficult conversations:

- Ask open ended questions
- Ask for more concrete information
- Listen
- Paraphrase for clarity
- Acknowledge their feelings (let them know they are valid even if you do not agree with them.)
- Say what you mean; don’t rely on them to pick up your real meaning from sub-context.
- Start with what matter most for you
- Gather as much information as possible in trying to solve your problem.
- Use “I” statements, do not use “you” statements (they sound like blaming)
- Invent options that would make you both happy



- Test the solutions you create
- Take the [Interpersonal Communications Assessment](#)⁴¹ that's also offered to VISTA Leaders before their orientation.

Read more about effective communication in the main portion of our guide [here](#).

6. Consider using Appreciative Inquiry to build a strong relationship with your VISTA Leader.

Appreciative Inquiry is an approach that considers the generative aspects and positive energy of an organization. Consider discussing the following questions with your organization's VISTA Leader to learn more about how you can collaborate to your full potential:

1. Describe a highpoint experience---a time when you felt most alive and engaged in your work. What was it about you, the situation, the organization, and the leadership that allowed this peak experience to emerge?
2. When have you been involved in a group which kept its eyes on the prize—that maintained a let's do it attitude, and, because of this approach, achieved a lot? What was the high point of working in that group? What did you discover about working relationships?
3. Imagine you have a magic wand and have three wishes to make your service an extraordinary experience for you. What would your wishes be?

Adapted from Appreciative Inquiry, David Cooperrider, Case Western Reserve University. ¹¹

7. Keep your organization's VISTA Leader informed about successes and challenges your VISTA members might be experiencing.

VISTA Leaders are eager to support your organization's VISTAs during times of challenges and celebrate their accomplishments when they succeed, but sometimes VISTAs are hesitant to share things on their own. Providing updates to your VISTA Leader can help them deliver high-quality support to the VISTAs they lead.

- The [VISTA Impact App](#)⁴² can help you, VISTA Leaders, and VISTA members track and analyze outputs connected to [Performance Measures](#).⁴³
- If conflict arises, share these VISTA Campus resources about [Managing Conflict](#).⁴⁴

- Read more about [Progress Monitoring and Reporting](#)⁴⁵ in the VISTA Supervisor Manual.
- Use this sample [Reporting Task List](#)⁴⁶ to keep track of reports, sponsor verification due dates, and member paperwork -- and share it with your VISTA Leader!

VISTA Leaders create their own networks when collaborating with VISTA members and partner organizations. Allowing VISTA Leaders to be involved in reporting successes and growth areas could benefit your organization by an increased public profile, connecting to new partners, and recruiting new volunteers or members in a strategic way.

8. Be mindful of differing leadership styles between you and your organization's VISTA Leader.

No two leaders are the same. Understanding how and when leaders do their best work helps each party fully support each other and be mindful of potential conflicts.

- Explore how to [coach VISTAs](#)⁴⁷ effectively, and share your leadership mindset with your VISTA Leader.
- Help foster leaders by providing feedback through a [Performance Review](#).⁴⁸
- [Assess](#)⁴⁹ your leadership style...
- And then read more about how to [play to your strengths](#).⁵⁰
- Ten common leadership mistakes include:
 - Not providing feedback
 - Not making time for your team
 - Being too “hands-off”
 - Being too friendly
 - Failing to define goals
 - Misunderstanding motivation
 - Hurrying recruitment
 - Not “walking the walk”
 - Not delegating
 - Not understanding your role

9. Check out the additional resources available to you on the VISTA Campus!

- There are many documents, webinars, handbooks, and other resources on the supervisor section of the VISTA campus. [Start here](#)⁵¹ if you haven't visited the site before.
- View additional VISTA Leader-created [Action Learning Challenge products](#).⁵²



Resource Guide for this Product

Our team has utilized a multitude of resources in the creation of this product to provide VISTA Leaders with the best possible information available. For easy referencing, we have compiled all of the resources used throughout this document into this Resource List.

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Understanding Leadership Styles

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